

Testimony for Substitute SB422
An Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies
and Sellers of Bottled Water
Submitted by the Rev. Cynthia Willauer
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I am Cynthia Willauer, in ministry for The Care of Creation with the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme, and I write regarding SB422, Senator Bye's substitute water bill drafted in opposition to the proposal that allows Connecticut's public waters be drawn from springs and reservoirs in Bloomfield and beyond to be bottled in plastic for private gain, while Connecticut citizens, even as they are implored to conserve, pay more. Further, I support the imposition of a moratorium on any new large water capacity agreements until the State Water Plan is completed and addresses this issue.

The church I serve, the United Church of Christ, has long resolved that we recognize harm done to our fragile lands and seas from disposable plastics and that we change our habits according. A 1989 resolution reviews the past to deplore that "within one century disposable plastics have created a crisis which threatens life on our planet." More recently Pope Francis has brought the situation up to date for all Earth's people in his encyclical letter "On Care for Our Common Home." In this document, accessible on line, we hear a most urgent call to reevaluate our relationship to resources even as we deal with the economies that wreck disaster.

I personally, have strongly opposed the bottling of public water for private gain ever since I became aware of the harm that was (and maybe still is) inflicted on communities of rural India by corporate drawers and sellers of bottled water, and that is just one example of industrial exploitation of a resource that should be treasured as commonly-held: water.

As in Connecticut we are rich in water, we are vulnerable to the "mining" of this precious resource in ways that can well escape the attention of most citizens, here as in less developed lands. So I am thankful my church and the leadership of others, especially at this time the Catholic Church, both Roman and Eastern Orthodox, call us to attention.

We have lot to learn regarding how we can keep our springs pure, our rivers and streams flowing and our reservoirs charging in a time of increasing uncertainty as to how the changes of our climate will impact all of our lives, especially the lives of the least advantaged among us, so it is imperative that the Metropolitan District Commission not act on its own to make deals it considers advantageous with ordinary citizens left out of negotiating process. And there should be no negotiating that gives a multi-national corporation license to drain 1.8 million gallons per day of our public water supply, while meanwhile the rest of us learn to turn off the water while we brush our teeth.

I urge that the Committee support SB 422 and I thank you for your work, sincerely,

Cynthia Willauer, 55-1 Beaver Brook Road, Lyme, CT 06371, ccwil@conncoll.edu

